

Which Bible Translation(s) Should I Use?

September 17, 2023

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, ‘I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD’” (Genesis 4:1 ESV).
- “Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, ‘I have obtained a male *child* with *the help of* the LORD’” (Genesis 4:1 NASB).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me,’ declares the LORD” (Amos 4:6 ESV).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matthew 6:24 ESV).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God’” (John 19:7 ESV).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God’s sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father’s house” (Acts 7:20 ESV).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae” (Romans 16:1 ESV).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me” (Romans 16:7 ESV).

- “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was” (Romans 16:7 NIV).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet” (1 Timothy 2:12 ESV).

Here are some verses where the ESV has a good translation:

- “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2 ESV).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day” (1 Samuel 10:9 ESV).
- “Then it happened, when he turned his back to leave Samuel, that God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day” (1 Samuel 10:9 NASB).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!” (Psalm 37:1 ESV).
- “Do not get upset because of evildoers, Do not be envious of wrongdoers” (Psalm 37:1 NASB).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “Judge not, that you be not judged” (Matthew 7:1 ESV).
- “Do not judge, so that you will not be judged” (Matthew 7:1 NASB).
- “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment” (John 7:24 ESV).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30 ESV).
- “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:30 NASB).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “And John bore witness: ‘I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him’” (John 1:32 ESV).
- “And John testified, saying, ‘I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him’” (John 1:32 NASB).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless” (1 Corinthians 4:11 ESV).
- “Up to this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed and roughly treated and homeless” (1 Corinthians 4:11 NASB).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy” (1 Corinthians 7:25 ESV).
- “Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I am offering direction as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy” (1 Corinthians 7:25 NASB).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV.
Here are some examples:

- “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding” (Ephesians 4:17–18a ESV).
- “So I say this, and affirm in the Lord, that you are to no longer walk just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their minds, being darkened in their understanding” (Ephesians 4:17–18a NASB).

But there are quite a few minor problems with the ESV. Here are some examples:

- “For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you” (1 Thessalonians 1:4 ESV).
- “Knowing, brothers *and sisters*, beloved by God, *His* choice of you” (1 Thessalonians 1:4 NASB).

So I can recommend the ESV, but I don’t like it as much as the NASB. The ESV is not as literal as the NASB, and it has strange English in many places.

Here’s where I would put the ESV on our spectrum between 1 and 100, with 1 representing perfect formal equivalence and 100 representing perfect dynamic equivalence:

- English Standard Version (ESV): 20 (10th grade)